



Trade Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative
October 10, 2005

www.ustr.gov

Broad Business Support for U.S. WTO Doha Agriculture Proposal for Bold Reform, Unlocking the Negotiations in Manufacturing and Services

What They Are Saying:

"This proposal is highly timely, and a demonstration of strong U.S. leadership needed to unlock not just the Doha agriculture negotiations, but the entire Doha Round...With just nine weeks to go before the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong this is the time for action....A successful conclusion of the Doha Round would spur growth and increase confidence in a fragile global economy. Today's proposal is an important step forward. We urge trade ministers around the world not to let this opportunity pass."

-John J. Castellani, President, Business Roundtable

"Ambassador Portman's latest agricultural proposal is exactly the kind of spark that can get things moving again... agriculture is the keystone to the entire Doha architecture, including crucial negotiations on industrial tariffs that the NAM cares so much about....U.S. tariffs on industrial goods average only 3 percent, while the unweighted average of such tariffs around the world is 30 percent – ten times as high. That's why these negotiations are so important. We need to get industrial tariffs down so our companies can compete fairly, and we can't make serious headway on that front until the agricultural negotiations get on track...The NAM urges business groups around the world to seize the moment and convince their governments to shift out of defensive postures so successful negotiations can be advanced in good faith."

-John Engler, President, National Association of Manufacturers

"These proposals represent far-reaching and eminently fair steps to break the Gordian knot that agriculture imposes on the entire negotiating agenda...Our partners in the EU, Group of 20, and elsewhere should demonstrate their commitment by acting to accept this offer as soon as possible... Taken together, these bold proposals would not only lead to a more efficient and competitive agricultural sector, but also inject new momentum for equally important progress in manufacturing and services negotiations....Once we get through this impasse, our chances of concluding a comprehensive WTO agreement with benefits to agriculture, businesses and consumers worldwide will be significantly enhanced."

- Dan Christman, Senior Vice President for International Affairs, United States Chamber of Commerce

"It is a bold and timely effort to break the stalemate in the WTO agriculture negotiations ...Movement in the agriculture talks is necessary for a success in services because many countries are holding back on services until they see progress on agriculture... The U.S. is the world's most competitive supplier of services. It has been running a services trade surplus since statistics have been kept. But even so our potential markets are constrained by many kinds of foreign regulatory and other barriers. A success in the WTO Doha Round can mean major benefits for jobs and companies in the United States."

-Robert Vastine, President, Coalition of Service Industries

"This is a major step forward for the Doha Development Agenda talks...Breaking the deadlock on agriculture is key not only because liberalizing trade in this area is vital to worldwide growth and development, but also because it will allow movement on services and industrial goods negotiations. These are trade sectors of tremendous importance to American business...This proposal shows the U.S. is committed to making the Doha Round a success for American business, farmers, workers and consumers."

- Bill Reinsch, President, National Foreign Trade Council

"I congratulate Ambassador Portman on taking the lead to address the outstanding issues that have prevented forward progress on a number of important WTO negotiations, including those that affect information technology products...Over three quarters of US-owned wafer capacity is in this country despite the fact that three quarters of our sales are outside the US – that means that free and fair market access is vital to us."

-George Scalise, President, Semiconductor Industry Association

"Trade in services is of utmost importance to the IT industry...We applaud US Trade Representative Rob Portman for taking an important step to end the current impasse over agriculture. This important action moves us towards WTO agreements that advance the global marketplace for IT products and services while creating more and better paying jobs for US IT workers."

- Harris N. Miller, President, Information Technology Association of America

"This is an important and timely announcement that demonstrates strong leadership from the United States...The deadlock over agriculture has impeded efforts to keep the negotiating process moving forward in other critical areas. USTR's agriculture proposal creates renewed hope for early and meaningful progress in the Doha Round....The U.S. has stepped up to the plate – now it's up to our trading partners to seize the opportunity. A quick and serious response from our trading partners means we can move forward and address barriers in other sectors, such as electronics."

- Rhett Dawson, President, Information Technology Industry Council

"We are enthusiastic about Ambassador Portman's proposal to advance the WTO agricultural talks. We hope this will energize the overall negotiations and lead to progress in other areas critical to the high-tech industry such as new tariff cuts on technology products and computer services commitments."

-Jim Jarrett, Vice President, Worldwide Government Affairs, Intel

"I applaud Ambassador Portman's strong leadership in trying to break the ongoing stalemate in the Doha agricultural negotiations. Today's proposal is a bold, productive effort to get the process moving again. The Hong Kong ministerial is a mere nine weeks away and we need to make significant progress on reducing trade barriers on manufactured goods like paper and wood products... Moving forward with this proposal could open the door for substantial progress in Hong Kong, not only for agricultural products, but manufactured goods as well."

-W. Henson Moore, President and CEO, American Forest & Paper Association

"I congratulate Ambassador Portman on showing strong leadership through example by addressing the critical road block on agriculture...ACLI supports the Bush Administration's trade policy agenda, which includes the WTO negotiations on Financial Services as the central pillar of interest to U.S. life companies...The U.S. life insurance industry is proud of the billions of dollars we contribute to the U.S. services trade surplus. Progress in the WTO Financial Services Negotiations is critical to securing and growing our overseas operations."

- Frank Keating, President and CEO, American Council of Life Insurers

"The U.S. agriculture proposal represents a vital opportunity to break the existing deadlock in the DDA negotiations – an opportunity that can only be realized if developed and developing country participants also quickly make serious trade-liberalizing proposals...The forward momentum that Ambassador Portman seeks to spur in the agricultural negotiations is also critical to moving forward more quickly the other aspects of the DDA negotiations, from non-agricultural market access to services."

-Cal Cohen, President, Emergency Committee for American Trade